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ABSTRACT

This pilot study was conducted to determine the sources of information utilized by admissions officers to enhance professional growth and to help in current professional responsibilities. In an attempt to analyze the verbal ability of admissions officers a survey was conducted among admissions officers to determine: (1) what they read, (2) how much they read, (3) how important are the professional journals, (4) what departments in journals are read most quickly and thoroughly, and (5) who writes for the journals. The survey, a five page questionnaire, was mailed to heads of admissions offices in 179 public and private colleges and universities located in New York and Pennsylvania. Fifty-nine responses, 33 percent, were returned. In addition 15 leading educational journals were surveyed about their readership and comparison was made between the admissions officers' responses and the journal responses. (JMF)

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What Do Admissions Officers Read? Sources of Information for Professional Development and Effectiveness

Presented at the Annual Meeting
of the National Association of College
Admissions Counselors

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October 8, 1975
Atlanta, Georgia

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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What Do Admissions Officers Read?
Sources of Information for Professional Development and Effectiveness[1]

INTRODUCTION

In a moment of curiosity about verbal ability, I wondered about the abilities and interests of my professional colleagues in admissions. Since they spend many hours of their working lives interpreting verbal scores, how do they rate on indicators of these skills? What do they read? How much do they read? How important to them are the professional journals? What departments in journals do they read most quickly and thoroughly? Who writes for the journals? These and related questions were framed in a survey that is the subject of this paper. The complete questionnaire is contained in Appendix A.

No reliable, comprehensive information about the training, background, reading habits, and sources of information utilized by admissions officers has, to my knowledge, been collected in a coherent fashion and published in recent years. I surveyed Education Index entries for the past ten years and found only two items about admissions officers that even closely approximate the intent of this study, but they are both different in scope and nearly ten years old. The first, The Admissions Officer, by Columbia University sociologists J. Z. Hauser and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, was published by the College Entrance Examination Board in 1964. It provides an interesting p[illegible] of admissions officers as members of an "emerging" profession.[2]

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[1] I am indebted to Miss Connie Ascher, a graduate intern, who provided invaluable assistance to this project during the spring term, 1975, and to Miss Karen Purcell, my secretary, who tabulated the results.

[2] Hauser, J.Z. and Paul R. Lazarsfeld. The Admissions Officer in the American College: An Occupation Under Change. A Report for the College Entrance Examination Board published by Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1964.

The second is The Mirror of Brass, a study of the compensation and working conditions of college and university administrators, including admissions officers and registrars.[3]

Other studies have been done, of course, on selected activities of admissions officers, but these have focused more on methods of recruiting, or managing records, or compensation, than on the subject at hand.

METHODOLOGY

To find out about the sources of information utilized by admissions officers to enhance professional growth and to help in current professional responsibilities, I mailed a five page questionnaire to heads of admissions offices in 179 public and private colleges and universities located in New York and Pennsylvania. These states were chosen because of the large number and variety of institutions present in them. The names, titles, and addresses, as well as the governance of the institutions, were found in the membership directories of ACAC and AACRAO. The questionnaire was tested for clarity and completeness by five Cornell admissions officer colleagues. It was reported that it took about 14 minutes to complete. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included in the packet.

In addition to developing a questionnaire for admissions officers, we surveyed fifteen leading educational journals about their readership. We wanted to be able to compare admissions officers' responses to journal responses. Eleven of the fifteen editors responded. The letter of inquiry is attached as Appendix B; the journals are listed in Table V, page 10.

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[3] Ingraham, Mark H., with the collaboration of Francis P. King. The Mirror of Brass. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968. See also, Francis P. King, "The Director of Admissions and Registrar as Reflected in The Mirror of Brass," College and University, Fall 1969, pp. 95-105.

The third and fourth steps in preparing for the study were to survey the literature on professional reading and job effectiveness, and to determine the job titles of the authors of articles in the ACAC Journal, The College Board Review, and College and University for the past twelve issues (each appears quarterly).

This report represents the second stage in a study of middle-level academic administrators, which I hope will document the origins, training, responsibilities, career paths, sources of ideas and information, status, and prospects of this growing group. The first stage was an article, "Middle-Management on Campus: Training Ground or Wasteland", which appeared in the NACAC Journal last summer.[4]

As a pilot project, without follow-up letters to non-respondents, this report had a satisfactory rate of response. The 59 responses equate to a 33% return.

THE SAMPLE

The 179 admissions officers in the survey work at institutions of almost every type. There are large and small, denominational and independent, public and private, two-year and four-year colleges and universities, and specialized schools, in the original population. However, the number of replies from two-year and proprietary institutions was too small to include them. Table I compares the population in the mailing and the sample of respondents by the four types of institutions included in the study. Table II compares the survey group with the respondents by sex.

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[4] Scott, Robert A. "Middle-Management on Campus: Training Ground or Wasteland," NACAC Journal, August, 1975.

TABLE I

Institutions of Admissions Officers Surveyed and Responding

	No. in Mailing	% of Population	Number Responding	% in Sample
Private Universities	23	12.9%	13	22.0%
Four Year Private Colleges	114	63.7%	37	62.7%
Public Universities	9	5.0%	1	1.7%
Four Year Public Colleges	33	18.4%	8	13.6%
Totals	179	100.0%	59	100.0%

According to this data, public four-year college and university respondents are underrepresented in the sample, while private university respondents are overrepresented. Private four-year college respondents are nearly on target. This profile might result in a skewing of the results if it is true that private institution admissions officials are more often solely responsible for admissions activities than are public college officials, who often combine admissions and another activity.

TABLE II

Sex of Population and Sample

	No.in mailing	% in Population	No.Responding	% in Sample
Male	145	81%	44	74.6%
Female	34	19%	15	25.4%
Total	179	100%	59	100.0%

Table II shows that the responding population nearly matches the survey population in the proportion who are men and women, although women are overrepresented and men somewhat underrepresented.

While the study sample is small and represents only one-third of the original population, the two groups appear sufficiently similar to warrant some tentative inferences and conclusions. Additional confidence in the sample is gained from the fact that, in terms of age, sex, education,*

THE JOURNALS: WHO WRITES FOR THEM

Three year's worth of recent issues of the three journals most closely associated with college admissions were reviewed to determine who writes the articles aimed at career admissions officers.

*length of time in admissions, and readership of NACAC Journal, College Board Review, and College and University, this group closely resembles the 811-person sample in the Hauser-Lazarsfeld study.[4A]

[4A] Hauser and Lazarsfeld, pp. II-3, II-8, II-11, II-16, and Appendix pp. 23,24.

The NACAC Journal is the major publication of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors and is read mainly by college admissions officials and secondary school college counselors. College and University is the publication of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, an association that is dominated by Registrars and admissions officers who are also concerned with Registrar-type activities. The College Board Review is published by the College Entrance Examination Board and aimed at readers concerned with the transition between secondary school and college. Who writes for these journals? Are they admissions officers, other administrators, social scientists, professors of education, guidance counselors, deans of students, or others? The question is an important one to raise if journals are important sources of ideas and information for admissions officers. Tables III and IV, pages 7 and 8, display the results.

The importance of journal reading as a professional activity will be discussed in the next section. For this discussion, let us concern ourselves with who writes for three of the most often subscribed to refereed journals aimed at admissions officials.[5] It is interesting to note that in none of the three did admissions officers write more than one-quarter of the articles. In two cases, they wrote fewer than 11%. (See Table III, page 7). And, admissions officers and Registrars together wrote just a little more than one-third of the articles appearing in the major journal combining the two professional categories, College and University (See Table IV).

[5] Only The Chronicle of Higher Education and ACTivity, both written primarily by staff members and free lance writers, have more subscribers among this sample.

TABLE III

Job Classifications of Authors
published in Three Journals
during 1972-1975

POSITION CLASSIFICATION	NACAC Journal	College and University	The College Bd. Review
Admissions Officer	15	12	9
Registrar	0	45	0
Combined Admissions and Registrar Staff	0	13	0
Financial Aid Officer	0	1	3
Student Service Administrator	6	10	3
Counselor-Academic Adviser	4	4	1
Academic Dean or staff	1	22	3
Other Administrators	6	22	16
Technical person	0	8	0
Educational researcher	2	16	9
Faculty	7	28	8
Student	10	8	1
Private consultant	3	0	2
Association official or staff	0	3	18
H.S. Principal, teacher, or Guidance Counselor	2	0	6
Government Official	1	1	1
Columnist/Reporter	2	0	0
TOTAL	69	193	80

TABLE IV

Percentage of articles written
by Admissions Officers and
Registrars in Three Major Journals

	NACAC Journal	College and University	College Board Review
Admissions Officer	21.7% (15)	6.2% (12)	11.3% (9)
Registrar	0	23.3% (45)	0
Combined Office	0	6.7% (13)	0
Other authors	78.3% (54)	63.8% (123)	88.7% (71)
Total	100.0% (69)	100.0% (193)	100.0% (80)

Since many of the articles in NACAC Journal and College and University appear to be "how to" and otherwise instructional in nature, it is intriguing to speculate about why so few of them are written by practioners.

THE JOURNALS: WHO READS THEM

Eleven of fifteen — editors surveyed responded to an inquiry about readers (see Appendix B). These journals were selected because of their apparent interest in college admissions issues. Table V, page 10, summarizes the responses. These data confirm that the primary journals (as opposed to news or general publications) for admissions officials are the three included in this study.

READING AND JOB EFFECTIVENESS

Reading, which it seems to me is generally equated to mean "learning", is a highly valued activity in our society. Most of us admire the avid and wide-ranging reader. To be regarded as "well-read" is important recognition.

We also assume that to keep up with one's field and world events, one must read regularly. Although there is no casual relationship demonstrated between reading and effectiveness in one's job, we presume that being well-read is an indication of a desire to be informed and current in one's field. Also, the bias that connects being well-read with job effectiveness is supported by some research results, but these do not control for other variables that may, in fact, determine the relationship. However, some positive relationship exists for teachers, and I think it is safe to assume that some exists

TABLE V

Readership as Reported by Selected Journals

Journal	Responded	Sponsorship	Circulation	Approximate % of readers with some admissions respon.
College and University	Yes	AACRAO	7,000	50%
College and University Business	No	McGraw-Hill		
Community and Junior College Journal	Yes	AACJC	43,000	10%+/-
College Board Review	Yes	CEEB	17,000	50%
Integrated Education	No	Integrated Educ. Assoc.		
Journal of College Student Personnel	Yes	APGA	10,400	10%
Journal of Counseling Psychology	No	APA		
Journal of Educational Measurement	Yes	NCME	3,437	N/A*
Journal of Higher Education	Yes	Ohio State Univ. Press	6,200	20%+/-
Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors	No	NAWDAC		
Jossey-Bass, New Directions for Higher Education	Yes	Jossey-Bass	1 500	10%
Liberal Education	Yes	AAC	3,800	N/A*
The NACAC Journal	Yes	NACAC	2,000	100%
The Personnel and Guidance Journal	Yes	APGA	45,500	50%[6]
Sociology of Education	Yes	ASA	2,170	N/A*

[6] The Personnel and Guidance Journal is read by many secondary school counselors who also have admissions responsibility, according to Ms. Judy Wall, Senior Editor, APGA Press, in her response to our inquiry.

* N/A means not available.

for admissions officers as well.[7]

THE SURVEY OF ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

The responses from admissions officials yield interesting data for both a profile of professional reading habits and to provide a comparison between admissions officials at four types of institutions. The data and differences will be presented in table form followed by expository narrative.

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[7] The literature on this topic is sparse, and primarily concerns school teachers. While there seems to be some relationship between reading and effectiveness, it is not clear that it is casual rather than incidental. Articles on this topic include the following:

1. "The Professional Reading of English Teachers in Florida." Research in the Teaching of English; 5; pp. 153-164; Fall 1971. Theo. Hipple and Thomas R. Giblin.
2. "What Teachers Use Professional Periodicals?" NEA Research Bulletin; 48; pp. 116-118; December, 1970.
3. "Journal Reading and Selected Measures of Teaching Effectiveness." Research in the Teaching of English; 4; pp. 45-50; Spring, 1970. Donald R. Gallo.
4. Garverick, C. M., "Teachers as Readers of Professional Journals." Contemporary Education; 41; pp. 27-29; October 1969.
5. "Reading and Teaching Performance." Research in the Teaching of English; 2; pp. 125-141; 1968.
6. "Professional Reading: Key to Inservice Development." Catholic School Journal; 68; pp. 40-42; February, 1968. Bro. Paul Metzger, SM, PhD.
7. "Encourage Professional Reading." Catholic School Journal; 66; pp. 42-43; June, 1966; Sr. M. Ronald, O. P.
8. "The Need for Continuing Professional Growth." Illinois Education; 53; pp. 154-155; December 1964; L. Goebel Patton.
9. "Teacher Differences in Professional Reading." Educational Administration and Supervision; 44; pp. 282-289; 1958; Helen Fisher.

In terms of biographic data, there are a few marked differences between the private institution and public institution officials represented in this study. (See table VI, page 13.) Note that while female respondents represent 25% of the sample, none of them are from public institutions. Also, although the median and average ages of respondents are similar, note that both the oldest and youngest respondents are from private institutions.

The data also show that public institution officials are more likely than those in private colleges to have completed advanced degrees. This probably is associated with the fact that public colleges tend to emphasize management activities while private colleges tend to emphasize recruiting among admissions officials. Therefore, the former seek specially trained personnel, while the latter seek recent graduates as new professionals.

Table VII, page 14, "Professional Information", also yields some interesting, but not unusual, information. The data on title is not surprising, although I think that if more public university officials had responded, there would have been more directors of admissions and records. The relatively large number of responses from private college officials categorized as "Other" reflects the fact that several associate and assistant directors responded from this group. The items "Months in Title" and "Months with Admissions Responsibilities" are also not surprising. In general, respondents had spent more time with admissions responsibilities than in their current title, which makes sense. The item "Precentage of Time" yields no unusual results, either, nor does the item on membership. In the latter case, it is not surprising that NACAC and AACRAO have so many responses since it

TABLE VI

Biographic Data of Respondents
(n=59)

	Private University	Private College	Public University	Public College
Sex				
Male	10	25	1	8
Female	3	12	0	0
Age				
High	54	63	48	48
Low	25	24	48	31
Median	34	38	48	34
Average	36	38	48	36
Highest Degree				
B.A./B.S.	4	12	0	0
MA/MS/MBA/MEd.	8	23	0	5
PhD/EdD/MD/JD	1	2	1	3
Progress toward next degree				
none	8	24	1	6
one-quarter	1	5	0	1
one-half	2	5	0	0
three-quarters	2	3	0	1

TABLE VII

Professional Information

	Private University (n=13)	Private College (n=37)	Public University (n=1)	Public College (n=8)
Title				
Director/Dean of Admissions	12	25	1	5
Director/Dean of Admissions and Records	0	3	0	1
Other (such as Associate Director, Admissions Counselor, Director of Educational Planning	1	11	0	2
Number of Months with Title				
High	156	312	72	94
Low	1	1	72	1
Median	48	36	72	48
Average	62	68	72	42
Number of Months with Admissions Responsibility				
High	295	312	72	120
Low	12	5	72	1
Median	96	96	72	96
Average	110	96	72	87
Percent of Time Spent in Admissions Responsibility				
1 - 25%	1	0	0	1
26- 50%	1	1	0	0
51- 75%	2	8	0	1
76-100%	9	28	1	6
Principle Activities of Your Admissions Office				
Recruiting New Students	9	29	0	2
Managing Data About Students	2	3	1	4
Informing Students	0	3	0	0
Selecting Students	2	5	0	1

TABLE VII
Professional Information
(CONTINUED)

Membership in Professional Organizations				
NACAC	11	27	0	8
NY or PA. ACAC	10	28	0	6
AACRAO	8	14	0	5
MSACRAO	0	9	0	3
CEEB	2	8	0	1
APGA	3	0	1	0
NYPGA	2	19	0	3
NAFSA	1	0	0	0
PDK	0	0	1	1
SUNYCAP	0	0	0	3

was their directories that were used to find names and addresses. What is surprising is that more respondents did not mention these two associations or the College Entrance Examination Board. Perhaps institutional memberships were not considered by some of those who replied.

The important item in this set is the one detailing "Principle Activities", since it was my hypothesis that private institutions emphasize recruiting, selecting, and informing (in that order), and that public institutions emphasize the management of data about students. These results confirm that belief.

TABLE VIII

Professional Subscriptions

	Private University (n=13)	Private College (n=37)	Public University (n=1)	Public College (n=8)
Personal	29	73	7	11
Office	106	224	6	59
Other	6	7	0	5
Total	141	304	13	75

The responding officials regularly read about ten periodicals[8] apiece. Most of these periodicals come to the official by office subscription; about one fourth are personal subscriptions. Only a small number are purchased at newsstands, read in a library, or borrowed (See Table VIII above.)

[8] In the questionnaire, periodicals were defined as magazines, journals, newspapers, special reports, etc. that cover education.

Office subscriptions to journals that enhance professional development may be an unacknowledged fringe benefit.

The periodicals read, reviewed, or scanned regularly by the responding admissions officials present an interesting array. (See Table IX, page 18). Some results were to be expected: e g., the fact that The NACAC Journal, The Chronicle of Higher Education, College Board Reports, and College Board Review are received by virtually all of the respondents. Not far behind, i.e., received by nearly one half or more of the respondents, are American Education, ACTivity, College and University,[10] Financial Aid News, Higher Education and National Affairs, and Personnel and Guidance Journal. Of these, the biggest surprise to me is the large "readership" of American Education, a U. S. Office of Education photo-essay publication. Other "readership" patterns are of interest either because they are heavily skewed toward public or private institution subscribers (e.g. Commentary, Jossey-Bass quarterly reports, Journal of College Student Personnel) or because they were mentioned at all (e.g. American Scholar, Commentary, Urban Review).

It is also interesting to see how these periodicals are ranked in importance by the respondents. (Table X, page 19).

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[10] This finding is about right for admissions officers at large, according to the finding reported recently in NACAC Journal that nearly 60% of ACAC members belong to AACRAO.

TABLE IX

The Periodicals

	Private University (n=13)	Private College (n=37)	Public University (n=1)	Public College (n=8)
NACAC Journal	12	36	1	7
ACTivity	11	24	0	6
American Education	10	12	1	2
American Scholar	0	11	0	0
Change[9]	2	7	0	1
The Chronicle of Higher Education	13	34	1	8
College and University	8	19	1	5
College and University Business	2	11	0	3
College Board Reports	12	31	1	7
College Board Review	12	33	1	7
Commentary	1	4	0	1
Engineering Education	2	2	0	0
Financial Aid News	8	25	1	5
Higher Education and National Affairs	6	15	0	4
Integrated Education	1	0	0	0
Jossey-Bass Quarterly Reports	1	3	0	0
Journal of College Student Personnel	2	1	0	4
Journal of Counseling Psychology	0	0	0	1
Journal of NAWDAC	1	2	0	0
Journal of Higher Education	3	8	1	2
Journal of Student Financial Aid	3	5	0	1
Liberal Education	1	0	0	0
New York Times, daily	8	16	1	0
New York Times, Sunday	11	26	1	5
Personnel and Guidance Journal	5	17	0	5
Sociology of Education	0	0	0	1
Urban Review	2	0	0	0

[9] Due to a typographical and proofreading error, Change was omitted from the list of periodicals. These ten respondents wrote it in the "Other" column. It was, by far, the most common "Other". However, I think that Change is/underrepresented because of this error.
probably

TABLE X

Rank by Importance[11]

	Private University (n=13)					Private College (n=37)					Public University (n=1)					Public College (n=8)				
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
ACTivity	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
American Education	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NACAC Journal	0	1	1	4	2	7	3	7	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
CHANGE	0	1	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
The Chronicle of Higher Education	12	4	0	0	0	16	9	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	2	0	3	0
College and University	1	0	3	0	0	0	2	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
College Board Reports	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
College Board Review	0	7	2	1	0	1	8	8	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0
Financial Aid News	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education and National Affairs	0	0	2	1	0	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
New York Times, Sunday	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
New York Times, Daily	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personnel and Guidance Journal	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[11] Several journals which received one vote apiece have not been listed.

Where are those periodicals with surprisingly high subscriptions, e.g., ACTivity and American Education? The only periodicals with clear-cut support as "important" are The Chronicle, College Board Review, College and University, and NACAC Journal.

Once we know which periodicals are valued, it is important to find out why they are regarded highly. The two tables following chart the value of these "most important" journals in terms of professional growth and current responsibilities.

When we try to discriminate among the periodicals to find out which are not only important, but also more important than others that are considered important, we find some interesting results as shown in Table XI, page 21. Note, for example, that some periodicals are cited in all categories of institutions (Cf. The Chronicle of Higher Education), while others are cited much more often by some than by others. This might indicate that there are differences in career paths and responsibility between private and public institution admissions officials.

Note in Table XII, page 22, that the public institution officials cite fewer periodicals and cast a smaller percentage of votes than the private institution officials. Perhaps public college officials feel a need for general news about policy developments more than they need information about procedural or special policy matters, which are more often discussed in the journals (e.g., Financial Aid News, and College Board Reports) than in the newspapers and newsletters.

Subscribing to a periodical and saying it is of value are important, but reading or reviewing it soon after publication is a key indication of its position as a source of ideas and information for the reader. Table XIII,

TABLE XI

Importance of "Most Important" Periodicals for Professional Growth[12]

Periodical	Private University (n=13)				Private College (n=37)				Public University (n=1)				Public College (n=8)			
	VI	I	SI	U	VI	I	SI	U	VI	I	SI	U	VI	I	SI	U
NACAC Journal	2	3	1	0	6	11	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
ACTivity	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
American Education	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Chronicle of Higher Education	6	5	2	0	17	9	4	0	0	1	0	0	2	4	2	0
CHANGE	0	0	2	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
College and University Business	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
College Board Reports	0	1	0	0	3	6	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
College Board Review	4	4	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
Financial Aid News	0	0	1	0	3	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education and National Affairs	0	2	1	0	4	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
New York Times, daily	1	0	1	0	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New York Times, Sunday	2	2	2	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Personnel and Guidance Journal	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[12] VI, I, SI, U represent Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important, Unimportant. There should be very few U's because all of these were judged to be important.

TABLE XII

Relative Importance of "Most Important" Periodicals for Current Professional Responsibilities

Periodical	Private University (n=13)				Private College (n=37)				Public University (n=1)				Public College (n=8)			
	VI	I	SI	U	VI	I	SI	U	VI	I	SI	U	VI	I	SI	U
NACAC Journal	1	4	1	0	12	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
ACTivity	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
American Education	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Change	0	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
The Chronicle of Higher Education	4	5	4	0	12	11	3	1	0	0	0	1	3	2	2	1
College and University	3	0	1	0	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
College and University Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
College Board Reports	0	1	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
College Board Review	3	5	0	0	5	9	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0
Financial Aid News	0	1	0	0	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education and National Affairs	1	2	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
New York Times, daily	1	1	0	0	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New York Times, Sunday	1	2	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Personnel and Guidance Journal	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

page 24, displays the responses about "Promptness of Reading." Note that those periodicals that have been cited as most important are read soon after they are published (Cf. NACAC Journal, Chronicle, Change, College Board Review, etc.).

What sections in periodicals do admissions officials read and value? How do research reports and book reviews stack up against "how to" reports and news of higher education? Table XIV, page 25, shows how this sample looks. The table, "Most Helpful Departments in Rank Order," shows that news of higher education is considered to be the most helpful section of a periodical. Research reports and reports on "how to" are the next most helpful. Book reviews and Letters to the Editor, sections that are presumably of intellectual content, are seen as no more helpful than notices of meetings.

Two questions come to mind after considering periodicals as sources of ideas and information for admissions officers. First, do admissions officers write for these periodicals that are judged by them to be important? Second, what other sources of ideas and information are judged to be helpful, and how do they compare, in terms of estimated value, to periodicals. The answer to the first question is striking. Of these 58 admissions officers, only 10 have published written materials, which included letters to editors and college catalogues, and one of the authors to them/is an academic social scientist new to admissions. This finding is consistent with the earlier finding that in a review of three years of issues of three popular admissions journals, admissions officers wrote few of the articles.

To answer the second question, we asked the respondents to rank order four sources of ideas and information about higher education in general

TABLE XIII

Promptness of Reading[13]

Periodical	Private University (n=13)				Private College (n=37)				Public University (n=1)				Public College (n=8)			
	<1	<2	<4	>4	<1	<2	<4	>4	<1	<2	<4	>4	<1	<2	<4	>4
NACAC Journal	3	2	0	1	11	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0
American Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ACTivity	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Change	0	1	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
The Chronicle of Higher Education	12	0	1	0	22	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	1	3	0
College and University	2	1	1	0	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
College Board Reports	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
College Board Review	6	3	0	0	8	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Financial Aid News	0	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Education and National Affairs	2	0	1	0	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
New York Times, daily	2	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New York Times, Sunday	6	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Personnel and Guidance Journal	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[13] <1, <2, <4, >4 mean within one week, within two weeks, within one month, more than one month of publication.

TABLE XIV

Most Helpful Departments
in Rank Order

Department	Private University (n=13)					Private College (n=37)					Public University (n=1)					Public College (n=8)				
	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5
Research Reports	4	4	2	1	0	4	11	7	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	4	1	0	0
Reports on "how to"	3	3	3	1	0	6	7	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	2	0	0
Book Reviews	1	2	2	2	1	0	2	1	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
News of Higher Education	9	1	2	0	0	17	4	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	0
Letters to the Editor	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	2	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Classified Ads	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
Announcements of new appointments	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Notices of Meetings	1	1	2	2	0	1	0	2	6	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	1[a]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a] Educational opinion

help to change campus policies, and help to improve office procedures. Tables XV to XVII convey this data.

page 27

Table XV shows that ideas and information about higher education in general are found most often in periodicals and presentations at professional meetings. However, ideas and information to change policies on campus are sought from colleagues both on- and off-campus, and at professional meeting presentations. Although periodicals are seen as an important source for these ideas, the other three sources, which involve personal contact, are ranked higher. (See Table XVI, page 28.)

Table XVII, page 29, which concerns ideas and information to improve office procedures, shows the area where periodicals are seen as the least helpful. To find suggestions for improving procedures, these admissions officers sought the personal experiences of others, colleagues on- and off-campus, including those giving presentations at professional meetings. In this example, not only are people, as opposed to publications, sought for help, but people off-campus, presumable other admissions officers, are seen as having valuable ideas. One may ask why these ideas are not published, or is the need for personal description trusted more than published information? The answers to these questions await futher research.

The last question posed to the admissions officials asked each to share "comments about the various sources of information available to [him] for [his] responsibilities as an admissions official." The responses did not add materially to the previously elicited answers, but they conveyed an attitude and a need. Quite clearly, personal thoughts and contact with others through informal and formal means, social meetings, workshops, and "how to" sessions are seen as the best ways to learn how to improve one's performance.

TABLE XV

Rank Order of Sources of Ideas and Information about Higher Education in General

Source	Private University (n=13)					Private College (n=37)					Public University (n=1)					Public College (n=8)				
	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5
Periodicals	6	1	3	2	0	13	9	6	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	2	0	1	0
Colleagues on-campus	3	4	2	3	0	4	9	6	14	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	2	0
Colleagues off-campus	2	5	3	1	0	7	6	11	6	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	0
Professional Meeting presentations	2	4	3	3	0	11	17	6	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1[a]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a] Master's degree program newspapers, education courses.

TABLE XVI

Rank Order of Sources of Ideas and Information to Help Change Campus Policies

Source	Private University (n=13)					Private College (n=37)					Public University (n=1)					Public College (n=8)				
	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5
Periodicals	2	3	4	3	0	13	3	6	11	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	0
Colleagues on-campus	5	2	1	3	0	8	10	7	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	1	0
Colleagues off-campus	2	5	2	2	0	4	14	12	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	0
Professional Meeting presentations	4	3	4	1	0	12	12	6	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	2	1	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	2[a]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a] Personal experience and imagination; my own research.

TABLE XVII

Rank Order of Sources of Ideas and Information to Improve Office Procedures

Source	Private University (n=13)					Private College (n=37)					Public University (n=1)					Public College (n=8)				
	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5	#1	2	3	4	5
Periodicals	1	3	2	4	0	2	6	15	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	0
Colleagues on-campus	1	4	1	4	0	9	4	6	14	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0
Colleagues off-campus	6	2	4	0	0	10	13	5	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	0	0
Professional meeting presentations	4	3	4	1	0	14	15	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1[a]	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[a] Visits to other colleges, workshops, trial and error, student helpers.

CONCLUSION

The small size of the sample in this study dictates that caution should be exercised in interpreting these results. Nevertheless, patterns emerge that suggest conclusions. Also, the study serves as a useful pilot for a full-scale project.

A survey such as this can end up being only a rather ordinary investigation of a somewhat unusual question if its results are not tested for further implications. I will use two questions as the starting points of this test. First, does reading and writing about one's field affect one's effectiveness in job performance? Second, what bearing on the question of professional status for a field do these questions have?

I accept as a given that reading and writing about one's field are positive indicators of job performance and effectiveness because they are cues to the traits of interest, curiosity, motivation, perseverance, mental acuity, clear thinking, logic, and a desire to be persuasive. These are important traits to observe when considering an applicant for a job; those whom we think of as effective generally do well on these criteria. Also, the literature on reading and teaching effectiveness reviewed earlier confirms that there is a positive relationship between these two variables.

For the second issue, professional status, reading and writing in one's field are especially important. "Profession", according to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1970 edition) means "an occupation or vocation requiring training in the liberal arts or the sciences and advanced study in a specialized field." While this primary definition does not describe most admissions officials, they are professionals in the sense of being "engaged in

a specific activity as a source of livelihood." Contributing to or critiquing the literature of one's field lays claim to still another, and more senior, definition of "profession:" "the act or an instance of professing; declaration; claim." While talks to students, parents, and alumni, and annual reports to faculties are activities allied to "professing and declaring," they are not the same as explicating an idea in an article or a speech for one's colleagues or constituents. And since admissions officers have a major influence on the intellectual tone of their campuses, it is an anomaly that they have so little intellectual activity in their field.

One might respond to this conclusion by charging that only a small percentage of faculty actually publish their ideas. This may be so, but the two kinds of refereed journals generally available to faculty, i.e. those of substance and those of method, are both written mainly by members of the field. Also, by definition, they are involved in intellectual activity simply by teaching.

These conclusions suggest that, on these criteria, admissions officials are not professionals, as is often alleged, because they are not active intellectually in the dynamic issues affecting their jobs. While it may seem reasonable to counter the latter statement by saying that admissions officers are expected to be "doers," not thinkers, their role as agents of access to post-secondary schooling makes them party to the critical social issues that demand thoughtful attention. And they are in a position to reflect on them for the benefit of campus and broader publics. We need more admissions officers who will.

APPENDIX A

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
GOLDWIN SMITH HALL
ITHACA, N.Y. 14853

Office of the Dean

May 30, 1975

Dear Colleague:

Admissions Officers are among the most important officials at colleges and universities, and yet little is known about them and their profession. Several good studies were done about ten years ago, but this data is now out-of-date. We would like to provide a more up-to-date profile of admissions officials and their sources of information.

The enclosed survey can be completed in from twelve to sixteen minutes. Please answer each item and return the questionnaire promptly in the stamped, addressed envelope enclosed. All individual responses will be treated confidentially.

Thank you.

Yours very truly,

Robert A. Scott
Associate Dean
Member of AACRAO and ACAC

RAS:sp
Encl.

Survey of Admissions Officials and
Sources of Information

Please complete each item. The survey will take about 14 minutes.

1. Please print your current title: _____

2. How many years and months have you held your current title? _____

3. For how many years and months have you held some admissions responsibilities? _____

4. What percentage of your time is spent on admissions matters?

   ☐ 1-25% ☐ 26-50% ☐ 51-75% ☐ 76-100%

5. How would you describe the principal activity of your admissions office? (Please check one)

   a. Recruiting new students ☐

   b. Managing data about students ☐

   c. Informing students about academic choice and placement ☐

   d. Selecting students ☐

6. Please write your age _____.

7. Please check appropriate box. Male ☐; Female ☐.

8. What is your highest earned academic degree? _____

9. How much progress have you made toward the next higher degree?

   None ___; 1/4 done ____; 1/2 done ____; 3/4 done ____.

10. What professional organizations do you belong to? _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

11. What periodicals (magazines, journals, newspapers, special reports, etc.) that cover education do you review? Please check every one that you receive or scan regularly and note whether it is a personal or office subscription, or another source.

PERIODICALS	SUBSCRIPTION		
	PERSONAL	OFFICE	OTHER
ACAC Journal	____	____	____
ACTivity	____	____	____
American Education	____	____	____

-please turn over-

PERIODICALS	SUBSCRIPTION		
	PERSONAL	OFFICE	OTHER
The Chronicle of Higher Education	___	___	___
College and University	___	___	___
College and University Business	___	___	___
College Board Reports	___	___	___
College Board Review	___	___	___
Commentary	___	___	___
Contemporary Sociology	___	___	___
Engineering Education	___	___	___
Financial Aid News	___	___	___
Higher Education and National Affairs	___	___	___
Integrated Education	___	___	___
Jossey-Bass Quarterly Reports	___	___	___
Journal of College Student Personnel	___	___	___
Journal of Counseling Psychology	___	___	___
Journal of Educational Measurement	___	___	___
Journal of Higher Education	___	___	___
Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors	___	___	___
Journal of Student Financial Aid	___	___	___
Liberal Education	___	___	___
New York Times, daily	___	___	___
New York Times, Sunday	___	___	___
Personnel and Guidance Journal	___	___	___
Sociology: Reviews of New Books	___	___	___
Sociology of Education	___	___	___
Urban Review	___	___	___

PERIODICALS (con't)	SUBSCRIPTION		
	PERSONAL	OFFICE	OTHER
OTHER _____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____
_____	____	____	____

12. Which of these periodicals are the most important to you? Please put in rank order.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

13. How important to you are the periodicals mentioned in item #12? Please name them by rank (#1, #2, #3, etc.) and check the appropriate boxes.

A. For professional growth:

PERIODICAL	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT
#1 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#2 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#3 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#4 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#5 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

B. For current professional responsibilities:

PERIODICAL	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT
#1 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#2 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#3 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#4 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
#5 _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

-please turn over-

14. How soon after the publication date do you scan or read these most important periodicals? Please check the appropriate boxes.

PERIODICAL	WITHIN ONE WEEK	WITHIN TWO WEEKS	WITHIN ONE MONTH	AFTER ONE MONTH
#1	☐	☐	☐	☐
#2	☐	☐	☐	☐
#3	☐	☐	☐	☐
#4	☐	☐	☐	☐
#5	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. Which departments in the periodicals are the most helpful? Please rank in order of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.

A. Research Reports _____.

B. Reports on "how to" _____.

C. Book Reviews _____.

D. News of higher education _____.

E. Letters to the Editor _____.

F. Classified ads _____.

G. Announcements of new appointments in the profession _____.

H. Notices of meetings _____.

I. Other _____.

16. Please rank the sources of information and ideas in each category. Rank the most helpful as "1", the second most helpful as "2", etc.

A. Higher Education generally

1. Periodicals ____
2. Colleagues on-campus ____
3. Colleagues off-campus ____
4. Professional meeting presentations ____
5. Other ____

Please name it _____

_____

B. To help change policies on your own campus

Periodicals ____

Colleagues on-campus ____

Colleagues off-campus ____

Professional meeting presentations ____

Other ____

Please name it _____

_____

C. Improving procedures in your office.

1. Periodicals _____
2. Colleagues on-campus _____
3. Colleagues off-campus _____
4. Professional meeting presentations _____
5. Other _____

Please name it._____

_____

17. A. Have you written an article(s), report(s), review(s), etc., that was (were) published within the past three years?

Yes ☐; No ☐

B. What was (were) the subject(s)?	C. What was (were) the category (please refer to item15.)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

18. Please share with us your comments about the various sources of information available to you for your responsibilities as an admissions official.

(use other side if necessary).

Thank you.

Pardon my slip-up. Please answer this additional question.

5A. The institution I work for is most accurately described as: (Please check one)

a. Public University ☐

b. Private University ☐

c. Public Four-year College ☐

d. Private Four-year College ☐

e. Public Two-year College ☐

f. Private Two-year College ☐

g. Other. Please specify: ☐

_____

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
GOLDWIN SMITH HALL
ITHACA, N.Y. 14853

Office of the Dean

March 25, 1975

Admissions officers are among the most important officials at colleges and universities, and yet little is known about them and their profession. Several good but general studies were done about ten years ago, but this data does not cover an important facet of the profession, their reading habits.

We are doing a study of admissions officials and their sources of information. Your periodical is one we think is at least scanned for pertinent information by admissions officials, and we will be asking them about it. To help us interpret the responses of our sample, please answer the following questions.

1. What is your total circulation per issue?_____

2. a. What is the profile of your readers or subscribers by job category, sex, age, educational level, and type of institution of employment?

   b. If this data is not available, please tell us what percentage of your readers or subscribers have some admissions responsibility?

   c. If this data is not available, please give us your best estimates of your readership.

Thank you.

Yours very truly,

Robert A. Scott
Associate Dean

RAS:sp